

Tim Eyman is not the state's tax guru

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Tim Eyman speaks with reporters after hearing that a judge struck down his latest tax-limiting measure, Thursday, Jan. 21, 2016, in Olympia, Wash. The decision from King County Superior Court Judge William Downing found among other problems that it was a thinly disguised effort to pass a constitutional amendment — which can't be done by initiative in Washington. The decision was an overwhelming win for Eyman's opponents, who prevailed on their major arguments, but it's certain to prompt an appeal. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson)

The Legislature must stop outsourcing its tax policy reform duties to Tim Eyman.

By [Seattle Times editorial board](#)

The Seattle Times

THE state Supreme Court once again struck down a Tim Eyman initiative, unanimously ruling on Thursday that the ill-conceived Initiative 1366 violated the “single-subject rule” for initiatives.

We’ve been here before. The ruling drew on a library of previous, similar rulings in swatting back Eyman’s efforts to require a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to impose new taxes.

The court’s ruling striking down Initiative 1366 — which passed last year 52-48 percent — was straightforward because the initiative had a convoluted hostage-taking approach to tax policy. It told the Legislature to put a two-thirds constitutional amendment on the ballot or the state sales tax would be cut by about \$1.5 billion a year. It was an especially bad idea when the Legislature is under great pressure to come up with more education funding.

But Eyman keeps coming back because voters keep approving his political snake oil. Voters like lower taxes, and that keeps Eyman in business. But voters also want better schools. And a functioning mental-health system, affordable colleges, reduced threat of catastrophic wildfires and competent public services.

The Legislature this year virtually ignored Initiative 1366 despite the fact it was on the books. But they should not ignore the messages voters keep sending — mixed as they are.

Instead of continually outsourcing tax-policy changes to Eyman, which are struck down again and again, the Legislature needs to address the flaws in the tax code head-on.

The Supreme Court’s school-financing McCleary ruling — which will require billions in new education spending — should force lawmakers to come to the table. Eyman shouldn’t be invited, but the message voters keep sending through his initiatives should be heard.

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